



East Maui Watershed Partnership

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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GO GREEN WITH THE ART OF CONSERVATION @ WORK

Makawao, HI, August 4, 2009—*Malama Wao Akua* (MWA) is a unique look into the forests, valleys and waters that are home to Maui's native flora and fauna. Local artists of all ages take up the challenge to support Maui Nui's fragile native ecosystems in this annual juried exhibition brought to you by East Maui Watershed Partnership (EMWP) and Viewpoints Gallery. This year's spotlight is on the people getting their hands dirty and their feet wet, working to protect Hawaii's native ecosystems (native = arrived to Hawaii *before* people). The exhibition runs at Viewpoints Gallery in Makawao October 23 - November 10.

Now in its fifth year, MWA has enticed over a hundred artists to walk in the cloud forests of *Wao Akua*, the upper watershed areas known to Hawaiians as the Realm of the Gods. The artwork of MWA also spans across Maui Nui, recording koa bugs, gentle 'o'opu, soaring 'iwa, and majestic 'ohi'a in sculpture, paint, and photography, from summit to sea. This year's special awards include Rarest Find, People's Choice, and The Art of Conservation at Work. With these new categories, EMWP hopes to challenge Maui's artists to dig deeper, look closer at the message of conservation, and the value of our native ecosystems.

The art contest is open to all Maui County residents, and includes a keiki division. All media are welcome. The subject must be Maui County native species or native habitats from ridge to reef, and/or the conservation efforts to protect them. A portion of sales will be donated to East Maui Watershed Partnership for rainforest protection and community outreach. The prospectus is available at www.eastmauiwatershed.org

In Hawaiian tradition, *Wao Akua* is regarded with great respect for it is the source for all life. It is the origin of the waters and seeds that ensure health and prosperity for future generations. It was taken care of simply by *kapu* - leaving it alone. Nowadays, with the influx of invasive species and development, *kapu* is not enough. There needs to be active protection, restoration and conservation. This is the spirit of *Malama Wao Akua*. This is why the art contest was created—to record the jewels of *Wao Akua* and other native areas of our island, and to present a message of its value to humanity.

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Attachments:

1. Prospectus
2. Image1-Connie J. Adams, instructor, and Christine Halton, student, on a plein air art hike w/ EMWP in Waikamoi Preserve.
3. Image2-Artists Katherine Ayers (foreground) and Cherie Attix on a plein air excursion with EMWP in Waikamoi Preserve

EMWP Partners

The Nature Conservancy · State of Hawai'i, Dept. of Land & Natural Resources · County of Maui, Dept. of Water Supply
Haleakalā National Park · Haleakalā Ranch Co. · Hāna Ranch Company · East Maui Irrigation